United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1180
10 July 1992

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ United Nations spokesman says Secretary-General has informed Security Council that he will not send fact-finding mission to South Africa before Council meeting scheduled for 15 July.

+ Secretary-General says parties to Western Sahara conflict have finished first round of talks with his Special Representative, aimed at reactivating Settlement Plan; talks to continue.

+ Secretary-General, in message at Summit meeting in Helsinki, urges Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to strengthen its structures and procedures for crisis prevention, crisis management and peaceful settlement of disputes.

+ World Population Day will be observed by more than 150 countries tomorrow, 11 July.

+ World population now totals estimated 5.5 billion, according to figures released by Population Division of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development.

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A United Nations spokesman announced today that Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had informed the Security Council that he would not be sending a fact-finding mission to South Africa before the formal meeting of the Council, which has been scheduled for 15 July. He further announced that the Council would hold consultations on South Africa and Cyprus on Monday, 13 July. The Foreign Minister of South Africa, Pik Botha, was expected to arrive in New York on Monday.

The spokesman pointed out that although it was expected that a mission would be sent to South Africa after the meeting, the Council might decide otherwise. He added that Nelson Mandela, the President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) had not yet notified the Council

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whether he would attend the Council meeting or not. The Council had decided during consultations that all the parties to CODESA would be allowed to address the Council if they wished.

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The Secretary-General, in a statement issued today, said that as announced in his report of 29 May 1992, each party to the Western Sahara conflict had agreed to hold talks with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, in an effort to reactivate the Settlement Plan deadlocked for several months. The first round of these talks, which involved consultations with the parties in Geneva, Rabat, Tindouf and New York, concluded on 2 July 1992.

The Secretary-General has been briefed on the results of the talks and has agreed that they would continue over the coming weeks along lines to which both parties have already consented. He expressed the hope that the way could be cleared for holding a referendum under United Nations auspices to determine the future status of Western Sahara.

"It is the Secretary-General's expectation that both parties will continue to cooperate fully with the Special Representative in his efforts to reactivate the process leading toward the referendum in Western Sahara and that, in this spirit, they will refrain from any action which might adversely affect the progress of these efforts", the statement concluded.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has urged the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to strengthen its institutional structures and procedures for crisis prevention, crisis management and peaceful settlement of disputes. Peace-keeping through available mechanisms could add an important dimension to regional stability, he said.

The statement was contained in a message read out by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Vladimir Petrovsky, at the Summit meeting of the CSCE in Helsinki on 8 July.

The Secretary-General said in the message that the United Nations had maintained close contact with the CSCE with regard to the dispute in Nagorno-Karabakh and had sent two fact-finding missions to the area. But the United Nations could only benefit in the pursuit of its own objectives if the CSCE developed an effective machinery for decision-making, verification and mutual assistance.

Pointing to the present ethnic and social tension in certain regions, the Secretary-General said security was not limited to a military dimension; most international conflicts had deep economic roots. He urged the CSCE to strive not only for greater economic cooperation in Europe, but to help developing

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countries in other parts of the world. National boundaries were no bulwark to keep out destructive forces, he said. Refugees and displaced persons were both sources and consequences of conflict that must not be ignored.

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Tomorrow, Saturday, 11 July, is World Population Day. According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the day will be observed by more than 150 countries, with events designed to focus attention on population growth. Among the activities planned are rallies, seminars and media programmes, including the broadcast by a number of national television systems of a video produced by UNFPA entitled "Towards a World in Balance".

At Headquarters today, the Executive Director of UNFPA, Dr. Nafis Sadik, announced the winners of a poster competition sponsored by the organization to promote awareness and understanding of population issues. There were 12 winners, ranging in age from six to 18 years, with three winners from each of four age categories. They were selected from 134 finalists from 36 countries. The winning posters will be produced by UNFPA and distributed internationally through their offices.

World Population Day was first observed in 1987 when the total population reached 5 billion. In a statement today, Dr. Sadik said that bringing the significance of population growth to the attention of as large an audience as possible was critical in enlisting national leaders and grass-roots support for programmes aimed at slowing population growth.

The world population now totals an estimated 5.5 billion, according to the 1992 revision of the projections prepared by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Development (DESD).

Growing at a rate of 1.7 per cent per annum, the world population will increase by 93 million during 1992. By the end of the century, according to DESD, the total will have risen by nearly 14 per cent, to 6.2 billion, reaching 8.5 billion by 2025. These increments will occur even though the population growth rate is projected to decline to only 1.0 per cent a year.

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Correction to Thursday Hightlights, 9 July:

The headline for the first story in yesterday's highlights should have read:

+ Secretary-General deplores series of incidents in recent days affecting safety of United Nations humanitarian personnel in Iraq, latest of which resulting in injuries to two Austrian members of United Nations Guard Contingent.

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